

Najib to Visit China to Commemorate 40th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties

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BEIJING, May 26 (Bernama) -- Forty-years after a far-sighted and historical visit by Malaysia's second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussain to China, his son, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will arrive here tomorrow to mark another milestone in the bilateral ties between the two nations.

Najib will begin his six-day visit to the world's second biggest economy by stopping over in Xi'an province, one of the oldest cities in China.

On Wednesday, he will fly to the Chinese capital to meet top Chinese leaders and mark the historic occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of China-Malaysia diplomatic relations on May 31.

During his visit, Najib is scheduled to host an economic summit attended by Chinese businessmen and representatives to further enhance economic cooperation.

Malaysia is keen to attract more Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in the country. According to reports, there will be 500 billion yuan available for investment abroad in the next few years.

In 1974, the late Abdul Razak had marked the beginning of a historic era when he first forged the bilateral ties with China, at a time when the country was still entrenched in its closed-door policy to most of the world.

Malaysia was the first Asean country to establish diplomatic ties with China during the era of the Cold War of the 1960s and 1970s.

As a result of Abdul Razak's far-sightedness, Malaysia enjoyed great benefits over the years, in terms of improving trade and facilitating people-to-people contact.

In fact, the friendship dates back centuries ago, when the great Chinese navigator Zheng He arrived in the Malacca Sultanate during China's Ming Dynasty.

"There's a Malay proverb which says, 'Flowing water cannot be severed' and there's no better term to describe the traditional friendly relations between China and Malaysia," said Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Malaysia last October.

Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Huang Huikang said at the 40th Anniversary of China-Malaysia Diplomatic Relations Reception in Kuala Lumpur last week that Abdul Razak's ice-breaking visit to China was indeed a "journey of good will" and the most important step for

lasting friendship between the two countries.

"During this historic visit, Tun Razak met with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Zhou En-lai. Both leaders strongly committed themselves to trust and help each other. Upon the signature of the Joint Communiqué, China and Malaysia officially established diplomatic relations, and sowed seeds of strong bilateral ties," he said.

The past four decades have witnessed a growing relationship of mutual understanding, close cooperation and true friendship.

From bilateral trade volume of less than US\$200 million in 1974, the figure rose to US\$106 billion in 2013, an increase of more than 500 times.

Other sectors are growing rapidly, for instance there are about 10,000 Chinese students in Malaysia and over 6,000 Malaysian students in China.

Even the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 will not put a dent in the country's strong ties, noted Huang.

"Our relations have never been affected by any unexpected single incident. Through the cooperation in dealing with the incident, our relations have become stronger and closer," he said.

On March 8, Flight MH370 vanished with 227 passengers and 12 crew members on board the Boeing 777-200ER aircraft. Almost two-thirds of the passengers were Chinese nationals.

The close and warm ties took another step forward with the arrival of two of China's giant pandas in Malaysia last week, that is seen as a symbol of the trust that has been accorded to Malaysia.

"The panda is not just a symbol of friendship but it is a heritage which is important to China. If it (China) sends a pair of pandas, it feels the recipient country is able to look after the pandas well and to them, the panda is a symbol of trust," said the Malaysian prime minister's Special Envoy to China Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting.

The two pandas will be in Malaysia for 10 years to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

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